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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

April 15, 2021



Surveying the tornado damage at the Community House, owned by Pleasant Hill Community Church in Tennessee. See more in the Local Church News section.

Storms and Tornadoes and Hurricanes... Oh My!

Grace to you and peace! Not only is it spring, but we have moved into the season of severe storms and tornados that have already caused damage across the Southeast Conference. Is your church prepared? Are you prepared? If a severe storm hits your community, do you have an organized plan to check on the safety of congregation members? Do you know who in your congregation relies on oxygen and will be in danger if the electricity goes off? Do you know who will need assistance if they had to evacuate their home? Does your church have emergency food supplies?



These questions are important! Each church should have a copy of "A Disaster Preparedness Manual for Churches." Written by our UCC Disaster Ministries and the Insurance Board, it can be [downloaded from the Conference website](#). It is a wonderful resource as we prepare for possible natural disasters!

As the Southeast Conference, we also need to be prepared as we seek to support one another. I often get a phone call from people wanting to help after a tornado hit a particular area. Because of our large geography, one of our greatest challenges is to even understand the location when severe storms hit and whether our churches have been affected.

Therefore, I am seeking 1 or 2 individuals in each state who are willing to serve as "Disaster Liaisons." They will be asked to make contact with local churches in their state after storm damage is reported and then contact our Disaster Response Coordinator (and the Conference Minister) with the information. By doing this we will have a Network across the Conference and be better prepared to assist each other.

If you or someone in your church is willing to consider being a Conference "Disaster Liaison" please contact me (cburch@secucc.org) for more conversation.

Meanwhile, be prepared – and stay safe!
Blessings, Char Burch

News from the Conference Office

From the Generosity Coordinator

Greetings all, Pray that you are all well, healthy, happy, and whole. A great note of congratulations to Our Transforming Churches Transforming Lives grants recipients, Cycle one, 2021.

Those churches receiving these awards are:

- Virginia-Highlands UCC, Atlanta, GA
- Kirkwood UCC, Atlanta, GA
- Holy Trinity UCC, Nashville, TN
- The United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville, TN



We are grateful to all those who applied and received these grants. Your continued work is so appreciated. We are here to help in any way that we can.

We remain grateful for your support and for all the ways that you continue to “TRANSFORM CHURCHES AS WE CONTINUE TO TRANSFORM LIVES”!!! May you and your congregations continue to be blessed and prosperous. Looking forward to seeing all of you (virtually) at Annual Meeting.

Should you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me directly or to any member of our staff.

Again, CONGRATULATIONS as we continue to journey, TOGETHER, BLESSINGS,

Min. Carrole

Annual Meeting Registration is OPEN!

Registration is now OPEN! Check the [Conference website](#) for details and to [register online](#).

Participate in creating the worship experience:

We invite you to send videos that have someone from your church saying, “We praise you, Re-Creating God.” You can also send video clips or pictures of members of your congregation involved in mission or justice projects this past year.

Assist with the technology

Seeking individuals to assist by serving as a Tech Steward for a Zoom workshop on Saturday morning or during the Business session Saturday



afternoon.

Advertise your church

Celebrate an event, honor your pastors, etc. during Annual Meeting. Rates and more details are available on the [website](#).

The Tentative Schedule is on the [Annual Meeting website](#).

#sechealingforward, #secuccam, #secucc

Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

- **Monday, April 26, 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central**

With more people being vaccinated and some churches making plans for outdoor services, questions are being asked about how soon churches might return to in-person worship and what current practices need to be maintained into the future. We invite all Moderators, Church Leaders, and Clergy to be part of the conversation. [REGISTER](#)

Clergy Zoom Connections for April

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**

Tuesday, April 20 & 27 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central); Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/479440102>

- **Especially for Specialized Ministers**

Tuesday, April 22, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)
Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/354744689>



Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2021. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of April 18

- First Congregational Church; Talladega, Alabama
- David C. Brown
- Amani Legagneur
- Sandra Mullins
- Gary Myers
- Jared Rumi

Week of April 25

- United Congregational Christian UCC; Columbus, Georgia
- Tonya Barnette
- Rodney Franklin
- Joyce Myers Brown
- Laura Landrum

Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN

Conference Search Committee Update

Please keep the Search Committee in prayer as they continue their process of interviewing final candidates for the position of Conference Minister. It is anticipated that the Conference will vote on electing a new Conference Minister at the June Annual Meeting.

News from the Wider Church

2021 Ecumenical Advocacy Days

UCC Advocates! [Register now](#) for the virtual 2021 Ecumenical Advocacy Days, "Imagine: God's Earth and People Restored!" This online conference to be held April 18 – 21 will include national speakers, worship, workshops, a denominational time, advocacy training, and a lobby day on legislation focused on climate justice. [Register now and spread the word!](#)



So You Want to Build a Hybrid Worship Experience?

The Indiana-Kentucky Conference is offering a two-session series and they are welcoming the wider church via YouTube live streaming. The series addresses the work of creating a worship service that is simultaneously online and in-person, without sacrificing the feeling of engagement and belonging for either type of worshipper.

- Session One: Time and Talent, premiering April 22nd at 6 pm EDT, helps you plan and prep. Find it here: <https://youtu.be/9t-PFd2OsPA>
- Session Two: Tools and Tech, premiering April 29th at 6 pm EDT, helps you with gadgets and go live. Find it here: <https://youtu.be/czsobF8w6KY>

Watch them both during the live premiers, or return to the Indiana-Kentucky Conference YouTube channel at your convenience and get the information and help you need to plan and host a hybrid worship service. It's free!

Building Peace with the Earth

Join the UCC Just Peace movement for a presentation and discussion with Amariee Collins, who has worked with Texas Impact and her congregation, St. Peter's UCC in Houston Texas, on issues of environmental justice and disaster recovery. Houston has some of the highest levels of toxic air in the country and is home to 10 of the "Toxic 100." St. Peter's has also begun to explore what a Just Peace declaration might mean for its ministry in the community. Join us for a short presentation on environmental justice and Just Peace followed by time in small groups to network and share with one another resources and upcoming events related to our common work.

April 27, 2021 from 4-5 PM (PDT)/5-6 PM (MDT)/6-7 PM (CDT)/7-8 PM (EDT)

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89585937276?
pwd=TEc2dGlrVzFKc2M0VzIjCVVBjOGJYZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89585937276?pwd=TEc2dGlrVzFKc2M0VzIjCVVBjOGJYZz09)

Meeting ID: 895 8593 7276

Passcode: 211499

News from our Local Congregations





'A miracle' | Pleasant Hill community honors first responders, prays three days after an EF-0 tornado touched down

by Grace King (10News Knoxville)

PLEASANT HILL, Tenn. — Just steps away from leftover debris, **Pastor John Fairless** gathered the Pleasant Hill community. “We’re going to express our thanks and our gratitude, probably shed a tear or two,” he said. “Tears of relief. Tears of joy. We’re reminded of what the loss could have been here.”

On Thursday afternoon, around 3:15 p.m., the National Weather Service said an EF-0 tornado touched down in the Pleasant Hill Community. Dozens of children were on school buses getting ready to go home.

Many others were nearby too. “This tornado landed in the middle of a church with a glass side, an assisted living facility, a school across the street, a nursing home down the street, a memory care place, and a wellness center,” Pleasant Hill Mayor Lisa Patrick said. “No one was seriously injured or killed. We were truly blessed. It was a miracle.”

Debbie Spearman (former SECUCC Generosity Coordinator) and Trena Wyatt were in their office when they saw the tornado coming through. “I saw a roof go swirling around in the funnel, and I screamed, ‘Tornado,’” Spearman recalled. “It went back up in the sky. God pulled it back up in the sky.”

[Read the rest of the article on the WBIR website.](#)

Trainings and Conferences

UCC Ministers Association Conference 2021

Join the UCC Ministers Association online on July 8 - 10, 2021 for their conference entitled Brave New World. The event features workshops, worship services, a wonderful concert, vendors and networking. They will be virtually hosted by the First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC in the historic town of Glastonbury, Connecticut. From Thursday evening through the Saturday 4 pm closing worship service, they will provide a plethora of activities that will enhance your music skills and give you resources and ideas for new ways of expressing God's Spirit in these pandemic times. They also will provide glimpses of the historic scenery around the church in Glastonbury, which you would have enjoyed if you had come in person as originally planned. Join instead online for a mental reset and spiritual refreshment with a taste of Connecticut. [More details on their website.](#)



Healthy Boundaries 101 and 201 Offered

The training sessions are offered Fridays from 2:45 pm-6:15 pm, and Saturdays from 8:45 am-12:15 pm. You must attend both sessions in order for the training to count toward Authorization Requirements for Ordained, Licensed, and Commissioned Ministers. The available sessions are scheduled for [June 4-5](#), [September 18-19](#), and [November 5-6](#). You will need to pick which of the sessions you want to attend. The fee is \$75. You can either pay online at <https://www.secucc.org/giving/donate/>. Choose "other donation" and be sure to list Healthy Boundary Training on the line provided. Alternatively, you can send a check to the Southeast Conference at PO Box 1950, Decatur GA 30031. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rev. Heather Fosburgh at hfosburgh@secucc.org or call 404-719-6572.

Conference Calendar

April 15 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT

[Commission on Ministry Meeting](#)

April 20 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

April 26 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT

[Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders](#)

April 27 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

April 30 @ 1:45 pm - May 1 @ 1:45 pm EDT

[Healthy Boundaries 101: Fundamentals](#) (*registration closed; full*)

May 4 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

May 11 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

[Clergy Conversations via Zoom](#)

View the **full calendar** of events online: <https://www.secucc.org/events/>

Contact Us

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Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh**; hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss**; cmoss@secucc.org

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